

a junior officer should never ask the Legislative Assistant to the Commandant for a description of his duties and responsibilities. With that said, I did notice that every time Col Hittle came charging into Gen Riseley's office he closed the door behind him. While I readily admit to not being a "rocket scientist," I did surmise that there were some "big time" discussions underway. But, as the saying goes: "Nothing succeeds quite like success." I was soon to learn that by working closely with the Congress, where Members and their staffs knew him, respected him, and trusted him, Don Hittle had effectively minimized the repercussions from Ribbon Creek. One senior Member from the House of Representatives was heard to say: "Don Hittle is the best damned Legislative Assistant the Marine Corps has ever had."

One could go on for hours, perhaps days, about Don's myriad contributions to his country and his Corps. As an example, I could tell you how he more than any other saved the Army Navy Club from extinction. Senator John Warner, who is here with us today, could tell you that when he was Secretary of the Navy he never had a more imaginative and dedicated Assistant Secretary. Joe Bartlett, the former House Reading Clerk and a retired Marine Corps general, could tell you how Don Hittle was responsible for the creation of the dynamic Congressional Marine Club. Incidentally, Jim Lawrence, who is also with us today, once said of this organization: "Congress created the Marine Corps—Congress has sustained the Marine Corps—Congress had mandated the mission of the Marine Corps—through this organization we are now bonded to each other forever."

In the end, however, all of his many other contributions to his country and to his beloved Corps pale by comparison to what he accomplished as a member of the renowned "Chowder Society," that elite group of brilliant Marine officers who, in the aftermath of World War II when the very life of our Corps was threatened, ensured that our existence, our roles, and our missions were written into law. Don's critical role in the survival of his Corps was best described by Gen Merrill Twining when he inscribed his book "No Bended Knee." "To: Don Hittle, Who saved our Corps." There can be no doubt that the Corps we have today, with three active divisions and wings written into law, owes an enormous debt of gratitude to BGen James D. Hittle, USMC (Ret).

Isn't it ironic to remember that 55 years ago certain groups, whose objectives were inimical to the survival of our Corps, were attempting to relegate us into insignificance. Today, with a lion's share of the credit for making it possible going to Don Hittle, we have just heard that Jim Jones, our 32d Commandant, is soon to be the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. Our congratulations go to Jim—his Corps is very proud—Don Hittle is very proud!

Several years after my retirement, Don asked me to join him for lunch at his Army Navy Club. His purpose was to ask if I would give his eulogy. I was honored beyond belief, but did not look forward to the day when it would become a reality.

Before closing, let me share with you a story that Joe Bartlett told me last week.

Jinny and Joe are members of a Bible class at their church. As a gesture of their love and caring for those who are terminally ill, the class prepares an audio tape for their listening. On one side they include the patient's favorite hymns, and, on the other, a medley of their favorite tunes. During Don's last days with us—a time when he was under heavy sedation—Joe swears that Don's body stiffened to attention every time "The Marine's Hymn" was played.

In closing, let me remind you that Don lived by two simple words—words which have given inspiration to our Corps for over 200 years—Semper Fidelis—always faithful.

Don Hittle was always:

Semper Fidelis to his God.

Semper Fidelis to his country.

Semper Fidelis to his family.

Semper Fidelis to his Corps.

And, Semper Fidelis to his fellow man.

In Don's memory, then, let us share these meaningful words with each other as we leave this holy place—and let us pray that one day we can live in a world where all of its citizens are Semper Fidelis to each other. Don Hittle would like that.●

CONGRATULATING BISHOP WILLIAMS

● Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I am honored to have the opportunity today to recognize Bishop Preston Warren Williams II, a man of faith and conviction and a leader in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. I am privileged to extend my congratulations to Bishop Williams as he assumes the role of president of the Council of Bishops. This role requires an extraordinary person, one of both strength and distinction, and the AME Church has found one in Bishop Williams. Bishop Williams, along with his wife Mother Wilma Delores Webb-Williams as Episcopal Supervisor, have been dedicated public servants and tireless advocates for at-risk youth of the 7th district. I am confident that Bishop Williams' leadership will enrich the entire AME community.

The AME Church has an unwavering commitment to its members and should be commended for its special mission to strengthen the community by encouraging and supporting children. While leading the 7th District, Bishop Williams built a partnership for at-risk youth, helped lobby for a teen mentoring program, and put in place services to provide for children in poverty.

When Bishop Williams served at the 17th District AME in Central Africa, membership grew by over 100,000, eventually resulting in the creation of a 20th District. Fittingly, Bishop Williams used his power and influence to bring people together and inspire hope in that part of the world.

His dedication to faith and community extends beyond the church into academia. As chairman of Allen University in Columbia, SC, and member of the board of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC, Bishop Williams brings his passion and fearless leadership to our students. Bishop Williams is a spiritual leader, an activist, community leader, husband and mentor. I join with others in lauding his service, integrity, and vision.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

TRANSMITTING LEGISLATION AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THE UNITED STATES-OMAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (FTA)—PM 53

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit legislation and supporting documents to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA). This FTA enhances our bilateral relationship with a strategic friend and ally in the Middle East region. The FTA will benefit the people of the United States and Oman, illustrating for other developing countries the advantages of open markets and increased trade.

In negotiating this FTA, my Administration was guided by the objectives set out in the Trade Act of 2002. Congressional approval of this FTA will mark another important step towards creating a Middle East Free Trade Area. Like our FTA with Bahrain that the Congress approved in December 2005, and our FTA with Morocco that was approved in July 2004, this FTA offers another important opportunity to encourage economic reform in a moderate Muslim nation. Oman is leading the pursuit of social and economic reforms in the region, including by selling state-owned businesses, encouraging foreign investment connected to broad-based development, and providing better protection for women and workers. It is strongly in our national interest to embrace these reforms and do what we can to encourage them.

GEORGE W. BUSH.

THE WHITE HOUSE, June 26, 2006.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 5638. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the unified credit against the estate tax to an exclusion equivalent of \$5,000,000 and to repeal the sunset provision for the estate and generation-skipping taxes, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with